

Press Release

HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Department of Public Works



PUBLIC SAFETY

“Ensuring a Safe
Harford”

EDUCATION

“Preparing Now,
Building for the Future”

EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

“Governing Smarter”

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

“Growing and Sustaining
Harford’s Prosperity”

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

“Protecting Our
Environment”

QUALITY LIVING

“Safeguarding What is
Important to Harford
County Citizens”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 20, 2012

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Roundabout Construction Underway at MacPhail and Tollgate Roads

(Bel Air, MD) - - The Harford County Department of Public Works has announced that work is underway for the construction of Harford County’s first “mini” roundabout. The roundabout is located at the intersection of MacPhail Road and Tollgate Road in Bel Air. The project should be completed prior to the Labor Day weekend.

“Mini” roundabouts function the same as the larger roundabouts in that vehicles should yield to those vehicles already in the roundabout, go around the central island in a counterclockwise direction and then exit the roundabout. The mini roundabout however, has a fully mountable center island so the rear wheels of large vehicles can navigate around the intersection.

Despite the initial outcry over the first roundabout that was installed at Marketplace Drive in 1996, roundabouts in Harford County have been highly successful. Traffic delays have disappeared at various locations such as Laurel Bush and Wheel Road; idling traffic while waiting for a red light is non-existent and most importantly, the safety benefits of roundabouts are undeniable.

According to the Department of Public Works, the 21 roundabouts throughout Harford County, many which have been installed for more than 10 years, have a combined total of 38 reported motor vehicles accidents with only three injuries. Conversely, at three of the 21 intersections which were “stop sign” controlled prior to the installation of roundabouts, there were a total of 78 accidents with 24 injuries and three fatalities from the period 1995 – 2005. These intersections included Tollgate and Westover, Tollgate and W. Ring Factory and Abingdon Road and Box Hill South. Since 2005, coinciding with the installation of the roundabouts, those intersections have had a total of only 13 accidents resulting in two minor injuries.

(more)

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The “original” or “normal” size roundabout was an idea that originated in Europe and has been encouraged for use in the United States by the Federal Highway Administration. Similarly, the “mini” roundabout was developed overseas and is highly regarded by federal officials as an effective, safety and capacity improvement for roads in this country.

As with the County’s first roundabout, the Department of Public Works will monitor the effectiveness of the new “mini” roundabout at MacPhail and Tollgate Roads. If this new concept proves to be as successful as the other roundabouts throughout the County, similar designs will be considered for future locations which may not be compatible for construction of the “normal” roundabouts.

The mini roundabout for the intersection of MacPhail and Tollgate Roads had been proposed for some time. Additionally, the roundabout is also supported by the surrounding community and will save more than \$400,000 as a result of not having to relocate adjacent utilities as with a normal roundabout.

Commenting on the construction of Harford County’s first “mini” roundabout, Chief Engineer Jeff Stratmeyer of the Department of Public Works stated, “Although new to Harford County, mini roundabouts have been used successfully in other countries for many years. We ask motorists to use caution when driving through the new mini roundabout until everyone becomes more familiar with this new design”.

For additional information from the Federal Highway Administration regarding roundabouts, please visit the following websites:

FHWA Mini-Roundabout Video Link:

<http://dl.dropbox.com/u/13562371/FHWA%20Mini-Roundabouts%20Informational%20Video%20-%20Condensed.wmv>

FHWA Roundabout Information Video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeVWPvRFDi4>

For additional information regarding this project citizens may contact Project Engineer Carolos Smith or Chief Engineer Jeff Stratmeyer, P. E. at 410-638-3509, Monday through Friday during normal business hours.

